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ABSTRACT

School-based inservice programs are the best way to achieve staff development and keep up with changing educational needs. Effective staff development programs should be comprehensive enough to meet the needs of all school staff. Good programs also help foster collegiality among staff, increase participation and communication, involve parents, and utilize administrative leadership. For principals, working on a district needs-assessment committee or applying for a district grant can facilitate school-based staff development. The first step to establish an inservice program is forming a needs assessment committee. Principals must be actively involved in planning, but should avoid dominating the process. Communication with staff can be maintained through an Administrative Advisory Committee. The length of inservice programs should be governed by the topic. Several methods can be used for delivering inservice programs: informational, demonstration, resource support groups, staff development resource centers, summer staff development opportunities, travel, teacher visitations, and parent workshops. In choosing a site for inservice programs, the length of training, cost, access to resources, and teachers' desire to get away from the workplace should be considered. Lastly, inservice programs should utilize resources in the school, and community. Sources for additional guides to planning inservice programs are included. (Contains 19 references.) (JPT)

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by Kenneth Meyers
and John W. Beall

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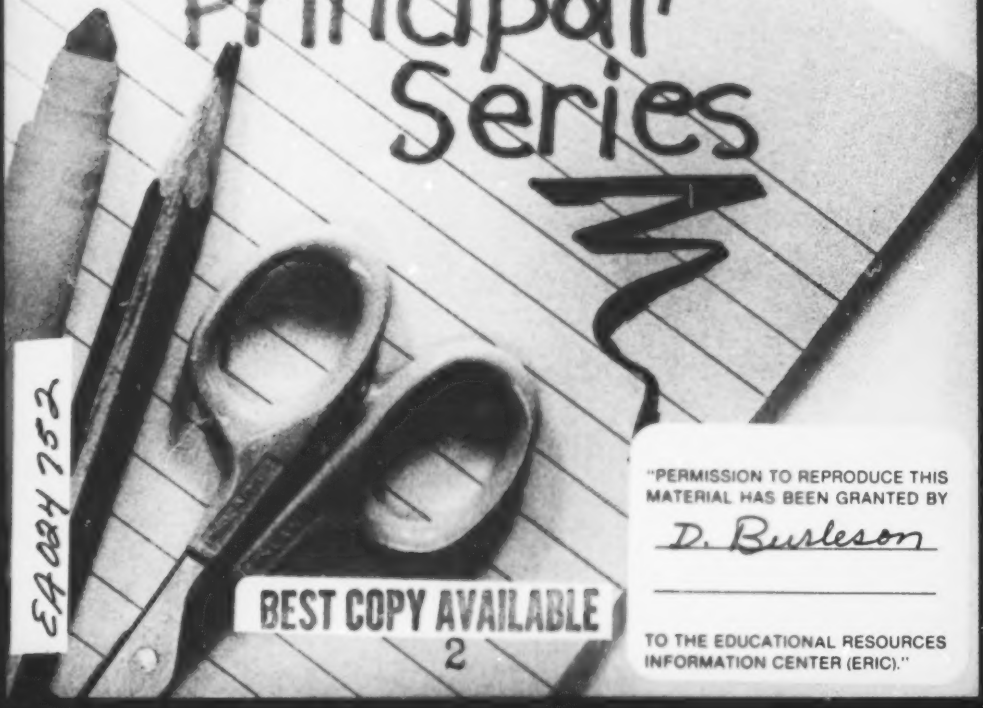

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Elementary Principal Series No. 8

The Principal and School-Based Staff Development

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Essential Elements of a School-Based Staff Development Program

The needs of the children we teach are constantly in flux. The mandates under which teachers work change frequently and often dramatically – state legislatures see to that. With the ever-expanding and changing scope of knowledge about the teaching-learning process, even veteran educators cannot escape the need for continuing education. Therefore, principals, teachers, and non-instructional staff need to view inservice training as an ongoing process. Those who do not continue to improve professionally will soon find they are left behind – out of touch with the changing reality of teaching and learning. And a school without a commitment to professional growth and improvement will inevitably decline.

Staff development is delivered in many forms, but here we will make a case for school-based inservice programs as the most effective way of upgrading the skills and knowledge of your staff. Such programs must be comprehensive in order to serve the needs identified by building staff. They are planned and implemented at the building level under the leadership of the principal.

Let us examine the essential elements of an effective school-based staff development program. First, it should be comprehensive. It must offer enough variety to address the different needs of all the building staff – including aides, custodial staff, and cafeteria workers. A quality, school-based inservice program should deal with many topics and be conducted in a variety of formats of different durations. A comprehensive program also should have depth. Some programs will require a significant amount of preparation and involve several hours of participation. A simple one-hour workshop, for example, would not provide enough time for participants to be properly trained in a new teaching methodology. Some components demand depth of delivery.

Second, an effective school-based inservice program must focus on the needs identified by all building staff. Who better than teachers

to identify needs in instructional areas? Who better than the custodial staff to identify needs for improving the physical plant? Who better than the special education faculty to identify needed policy changes for working with handicapped children? And what better group to involve in developing a homework policy than parents? A cornerstone of a successful, school-based inservice program is the involvement of the entire school community.

A third element of a successful, school-based staff development program is the collegiality it creates among the staff. For example, teacher aides might attend programs that, though primarily designed for teachers, can be modified to include their needs and interests. Or the planning and implementation of a school beautification program might involve parents and the custodial staff. The opportunity to interact on common concerns develops respect among participants in an inservice program, thus enhancing collegiality.

A fourth element of a successful school-based inservice program is the increased participation and improved communication among staff. To some extent, this occurs automatically in that the staff have both identified the content of the inservice programs and helped to design their presentation format. This kind of teacher/staff involvement in cooperative decision making is imperative if change and improvement are to occur. As teachers come to realize that not only are they being listened to but that their suggestions are being implemented, then ideas for school improvement will flow unabated to your office for consideration. You will not be able to stop them; nor will you want to.

A fifth element of an effective school-based inservice program is the involvement of parents, which can take many forms. For example, including parents in a school-needs survey or informing them of inservice training under way will reap positive public relations for your school. In Florida, where the authors work as elementary principals, state law requires the schools to involve parents as advisors in the decision-making functions of the school. We have found that keeping parents informed about all inservice activities being planned and implemented is time well spent. Another, often overlooked, function of a school inservice program is providing training specifically for parents. Both research and experience show that children's academic and social development is enhanced when parents reinforce what is taught at school. Parent workshops on new or existing curriculum, on discipline, and even on parenting skills can all help in a child's overall development.

The final element in a successful school-based inservice program is a building-level administrator – usually the principal – who provides the leadership to make it all happen. This is a demanding role involving careful planning, coordination, and follow through. Although principals cannot be expected to be experts in every area of inservice education, they can provide the creative energy, marshall the resources, and serve as the catalyst for the school's self-analysis leading to change and improvement.

Elementary principals committed to school-based staff development would do well to chart their course by using the essential elements described here. Remember, however, they are not inclusive. Every school is different, with each having its own set of needs for change and improvement. The principal's initial step, in consultation with the staff, is to set up a process for identifying the inservice needs of the school.

Administrative Considerations for a School-Based Staff Development Program

The decision to develop a school-based staff development program is very much in keeping with the national movement toward school-based management and decision making and teacher empowerment. Traditionally, inservice education has been the responsibility of central office staff, who developed programs for the entire district without giving much consideration to the specific needs of teachers and other staff at the building level. As a result, participation in these programs was less than enthusiastic; and the likelihood of changing the practices of those attending was problematical.

If your district remains wedded to a centrally planned inservice program, probably the best way to influence its direction is to volunteer to serve on the district needs-assessment committee. In this way you can ensure input that will benefit your school. On the other hand, if your central administration is receptive to the movement toward local planning and accountability and supports school-based inservice education, it should be willing to allocate funds from general budget for staff development at individual schools. This means, of course, that central office staff assigned to staff development may have to take on new roles that are more facilitative than directive.

Another effective way for the transition of staff development from district-level control to school-based control is through a district grant system. The district in which the authors work provides considerable funds, which individual schools apply for in the form of a staff development grant. A committee at each school determines its staff development priorities, writes up its grant proposal, and submits it. The district Inservice Council reviews the proposals and awards grants based on established criteria. The Inservice Council is composed of representatives from every school. This ensures a fair and equitable method of assessing all proposals, yet still involves the schools in the decision-making process for their own staff development. (As an aside, the flow of proposals from particular schools helps to dis-

tinguish those building administrators focused on staff development from those who see themselves primarily as managers. This may be an important consideration in administrator evaluation by the superintendent.)

Finally, by the nature of the criteria used to award the grants, this plan offers the flexibility to incorporate both district goals and those of the school-based inservice program.

The First Step: Needs Assessment

No plan to implement a comprehensive school-based inservice program can proceed without some type of needs assessment. The first step is to form a school needs-assessment committee to identify inservice needs. The initial committee should be elected representatives from each specialty area (music, art, physical education) and each grade level and also a parent or community representative. Sometimes it may be appropriate to solicit the input of some of your more mature students.

Your role should be primarily that of facilitator. The committee must feel that it is in charge and thus has ownership of the needs-assessment process. Obviously, the existing school climate, the sophistication of the committee members, and their interpersonal relationships with you are important considerations as the committee undertakes its assignment.

A needs assessment provides information about the current conditions or concerns of the staff and also gives indications about priorities. Built into the assessment process should be the kinds of data needed for the evaluation of inservice activities.

There are many good commercially produced instruments that will provide very detailed information about your school. Some of them focus on school climate (see the Phi Delta Kappa publication, *Handbook for Conducting School Climate Improvement Projects*). The Metritech materials, originating from the University of Illinois, are an excellent resource (Metritech Inc., 111 North Market St., Champaign, IL 61820). Another good resource is the self-evaluation instrument used by schools in preparation for accreditation. It is very comprehensive, covering every curriculum area, facility needs, district support, and many other areas. The committee may decide to design its own instrument or modify an existing one. Regardless of how the information is obtained, be sure the instrument provides the committee with sufficient valid information to give direction.

Ideally, the needs assessment should include everyone – faculty, non-instructional staff, para-professional staff, parents, and students. You may want to include selective central office staff who know your school and the community it serves. Suffice it to say, the more feedback you receive the more comprehensive and thorough the committee's planning can be.

Administrative Assignments

You will have to handle several administrative details of planning and implementing a school-based inservice program yourself, simply because your position gives you access to certain key people and resources. Moreover, because your time is more flexible than that of committee members tied into a daily teaching schedule, you should agree to take care of these details. Remember, teachers want to see you involved; their perceptions of you will be enhanced by your taking responsibility for some of the messy details of the planning process.

The other side of the coin is avoiding taking on too much and thus limiting the involvement of the committee members. Sometimes a well-meaning principal, eager to be helpful, can undermine the effectiveness of the planning committee by doing too much. In the excitement of wanting to get things under way, be careful not to take the ball away. Only reach for it when it is directed to you. And by all means, don't drop it!

Maintaining a balance calls for sensitive listening to discern the expectations and feelings of the committee members. It is often helpful to meet privately with the chairperson of the committee to discuss what you feel is an appropriate role for you in the planning and implementation stages. Ask the chairperson to help you filter through the various assignments as they come up to decide which may be handled more easily by you or by the committee.

Teacher and Staff Involvement

Much has already been said about the importance of staff involvement in a school-based inservice program. One way the authors have found to keep the information flowing is through an Administrative Advisory Committee. Essentially, the role of this committee is to advise the principal, although it can take on other duties. This committee, composed of only faculty representatives, should be formed at the beginning of the school year. In contrast to the Inservice Education Committee, this one does not have parent or community rep-

resentatives and need not have equal representation from all grade levels. In many schools, membership of the Administrative Advisory Committee rotates from year to year.

The primary qualification for teachers on this committee is that they feel secure enough in their relationship with the principal to advise him or her objectively and candidly about any aspect of the overall school program. In other words, any issue is fair game for discussion. With this kind of freedom, many interesting proposals come up that could easily be turned into staff development opportunities.

In some districts a teacher advisory committee is mandated by union contract. Sometimes this results in an adversarial relationship, leading to a tug-of-war between administration and staff with power being the prize. However, this need not happen if you are willing to make the first move (or even the second or third) to show that you want to share authority in ways that will benefit children and the staff. In this way, the committee will come to accept joint responsibility for monitoring school climate, curriculum needs, personnel needs, and staff development needs.

Too often, when planning for staff development, the expertise and knowledge of the school staff is overlooked. Especially in a school-based staff development program, first consideration should be given to using your own staff as consultants and presenters. Many teachers have wonderful ideas and methods to share with the whole faculty. A case in point is the recent push for cooperative learning. These techniques are not new; they have been used successfully by many teachers for years. Take stock of the talent behind the closed classroom doors. Invite these teachers to share their expertise. Perhaps a whole series of inservice sessions could be organized spotlighting local teachers with special expertise in such areas as reading comprehension, math manipulatives, or process writing.

Another way of involving staff in an ongoing school-based inservice program is to have selected teachers attend regional, state, and national conferences or workshops, with the expectation that they will share the new concepts and methods they learned with their peers when they return. Obviously, there are restrictions to this approach because of limited funds from the district for staff travel and the limited days teachers can be away from their classroom for professional conferences. There will be some teachers who will pay all or some of their expenses for their professional growth. And you can be aggressive in securing whatever funds are available from the district for professional travel for your teachers.

As principal and instructional leader, you no doubt are aware of the staff development needs of your staff. You may have special expertise in certain areas that could be put to use in your own school's inservice program, or you might be aware of excellent commercially produced inservice packages that you can purchase to use as the basis for an inservice program.

The authors have had success presenting various inservice programs at their respective schools. As an example, one of the authors used *Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement* (TESA), distributed by Phi Delta Kappa. Since he had received training at a TESA workshop that certified him as an instructor for the program, the only expense to the school was the purchase of the TESA manual and support materials. The workshop was scheduled after school and on two Saturdays. Attendance was voluntary but participation was excellent. Those participating embraced the program and have implemented many of its concepts in their teaching. The same author also spent two years studying the Madeline Hunter instructional planning model and presented a series of 20 after-school inservice sessions of one hour on the model for interested teachers at his school. It was combined with six hours of a nationwide teleconference and a log of classroom implementation hours for a total of more than 40 hours of inservice credit for the teachers.

Examples of commercially available inservice packages are *Write More, Learn More*, a writing-across-the-curriculum program distributed by Phi Delta Kappa (P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402-0789), and several programs from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (1250 N. Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-1403). Some programs require training for certification as an instructor of the program; others provide trainer's notes to facilitate local use. One such program is *Motivating the Discouraged Learner* by Teacher Education Resources. Another package, produced by Universal Dimensions, is *Effective Management for Positive Achievement in the Classroom* (930 Pitner Ave., Evanston, IL 60202). Its leader's guide is complete with questions for group discussion, activities, and additional bibliographic lists.

Still another form of staff involvement is a joint school inservice program, which the authors have used successfully. Together we planned a series of cooperative inservice activities, which were funded through our district inservice grant program. We scheduled two common inservice days that allowed for visitations by teachers between our two schools.

For the first inservice day we planned a morning of presentations using an outside consultant from the local university, paid for by the grant money. During lunch we had a motivational speaker; and during the afternoon teachers met in resource groups to share innovative and successful teaching techniques. Teachers said that they appreciated being treated as professionals and that their special abilities were being recognized. The whole day was considered a great success, with everyone, including us, coming out winners.

The second inservice day was devoted to reviewing a series of reading texts being considered for adoption. The textbook publishers' representatives provided copies of their texts and were invited to spend the morning with us. However, they were not asked to make presentations on behalf of their particular series. Rather, those teachers who had done pilot-testing of the various series in preparation for adoption were asked to discuss the pros and cons of each series based on their experiences in the classroom. Listening to a public critique of their textbooks caused some of the publishers' representatives to squirm; one even packed up and left in a huff. But for the teachers, the opportunity to hear their peers evaluate the texts from a practical perspective of what works and what does not work proved to be an enlightening inservice experience.

We have reported here a few of the ways to involve staff (including the principal) in a school-based inservice program. By using the expertise of the staff as well as some of the better packaged programs, a school can develop a staff development program that is tailored to its needs.

Timing and Delivery Methods

Once the inservice topic has been selected, a number of decisions must be made to give the program form and life. The first of these is the timing or duration of the program. Should it be short term or long term? Short term can range from a single session up to a few, with long term taking over from there. The key to planning is to adjust the timing according to the nature of the topic. In other words, do not try to string out the topic over several sessions when the content does not justify it. Similarly, do not try to circumscribe a topic requiring considerable depth into one or two sessions.

An example of an effective short-term inservice program from the authors' own school district is one that involved all of the elementary schools in helping to establish a districtwide student retention policy. It was planned for two after-school sessions at each school. In the first session the brainstorming technique was used to allow teachers to express their attitudes and perceptions about retention. In addition, they were given copies of journal articles and research summations at the end of the session with the assignment to read them and to be prepared to discuss them at a second session two days later. The second session was devoted to pulling together their own thoughts with the research data presented in the handouts and to develop collaboratively a set of recommendations about retention to be presented to the superintendent and school board.

The design of this inservice program allowed teacher input from each school, provided them with current research on the retention issue, and involved them in developing a districtwide policy for student retention. As a result, teachers have become better informed – and more critical – about retention, and at the same time are contributing to policy-level decision making – all in a two-session inservice program.

The scope of short-term inservice sessions is limitless. The inservice planning committee could easily design a full year of short-term

programs based on the topics identified in the needs-assessment process. The key to involvement in a school-based inservice program is variety.

While there certainly is value in having several short-term inservice activities, we have found long-term staff development programs to be the most effective. When spaced over a longer period, participants have more opportunity to discuss and reflect on the new knowledge and techniques they are learning. There is more time for interaction with peers – a critical element in the success of an inservice program. If the inservice program is skills oriented, teachers need time to try out the new skills in their classroom and then get feedback and coaching from their peers.

Inservice Delivery Methods

There are many methods of presenting inservice programs. Some examples follow.

Informational. Probably the most widely used method for staff development is a presenter telling participants about new ideas or giving them information on a specific topic. The effectiveness of this method depends highly on the delivery style of the presenter. If the presenter is an acknowledged expert on the subject and can relate to the realities of the classroom, then your teachers are likely to accept the presenter's ideas and suggestions. However, teachers will resent being told by "ivory tower" types that what they are doing is all wrong and here is the way it should be done.

When using an outside consultant as a presenter, offer your assistance in setting up the meeting room and arranging for any audiovisual equipment requested. Give the presenter some background about your school community and the needs of the staff. Plan to set aside time to participate in or at least be present during the first session in order to evaluate the presenter. Most are excellent communicators, but some are not. If things are not going well, it may be necessary to take the presenter aside at the first break and indicate what is needed to hold the group. Remember, the consultant has been hired to meet your school's needs. If this is not happening, then you have a duty to intervene, albeit tactfully.

Demonstration. This method often is used in conjunction with the informational method. It involves showing participants how to carry out recommended practices, with the presenter often modeling the techniques. The presenter also may use overheads, films, slides, and audio or video tapes to demonstrate new methods.

Resource Support Groups. The authors have found this delivery method to be very effective in their schools. It acknowledges teachers' expertise and values their experiences as professional educators. In this method teachers and other staff come together in small groups to share ideas or solve common problems. Groups should be kept small to encourage interaction, with membership at no more than eight. With smaller groups, all members have sufficient time to contribute and explain their points of view. The groups function better when one member serves as the group leader, keeping the group on task and focused on finding solutions and sharing ideas.

This method can be used effectively to accomplish various inservice needs. One example is a resource group on implementing a newly adopted reading series. Teachers from one grade level might meet regularly as a resource group to discuss their successes and frustrations in using the new reading series. By sharing their experiences as peers, teachers can assist one another in becoming more confident when implementing change.

Staff Development Resource Center. Having a resource center in your building is another way of helping individual teachers and other staff enhance their professional knowledge and skills. The advantage of the school-based resource center is that staff can use the center at whatever time is convenient and for whatever purpose they choose. The center should be in a location readily accessible to the staff. An unused classroom, a room adjacent to the regular library, or even a part of the teachers' lounge are possible sites for the center. It should be a pleasant place to visit and work.

This center should contain a variety of supplies for creating instructional materials and a good selection of professional journals and other publications to help staff keep abreast of research and promising practices. Following are types of materials that might be included in your center.

1. Curriculum Materials: curriculum guides, district curriculum bulletins, sample textbooks, and computer instructional programs.
2. Construction Materials: colored construction paper, regular paper, newsprint, colored pencils, crayons, felt markers, glue, masking tape, index cards, scissors, stapler, three-hole punch, die-cuts, etc.
3. Equipment: photocopying machine, die-cut machine, laminating machine, tape recorder, typewriter, video player, camcorder, computer word processor, etc.

4. Professional Materials: professional books and journals, audio cassettes on educational topics, brochures on upcoming conferences, college bulletins for advanced degree requirements, etc.

Summer Staff Development Opportunities. Many school districts, universities, and professional organizations offer programs for teachers during the summer months. As principal, you can encourage your staff to participate in these programs, especially if they are in areas that your school has identified as needing improvement. The costs for attending these programs may present an obstacle for some teachers. Here again, you may be in a position to assist teachers in obtaining financial assistance by applying for district staff development funds or with funds raised by your parent association. The district office and parent association likely will be more amenable to providing funds if you can show them how teachers' participation will benefit your school and its students.

Travel. Travel may not fall within the usual definition of staff development, but it can be a vital activity for enhancing the instructional program in your school. Teachers' travel experiences in this country and abroad can make social studies lessons come alive. Encourage your teachers to collect brochures, travel posters, slides, recordings, and artifacts from the places they visit. They can use these in their own lessons and perhaps share them with other teachers by placing them on loan in the resource center. Funds from your instructional materials budget might be used to supplement teachers' personal funds to purchase these materials.

Teacher Visitations. Teachers, especially beginning teachers, can learn much by observing each other. Teacher visits can occur within a school or in nearby schools. Scheduling visits to other schools will require coordination with the principals and teachers of cooperating schools. For out-of-school visits, you will have to arrange for released time and hiring of substitutes. In-school visits usually can be arranged during preparation periods. Teacher visits should be planned with a clear purpose in mind. Teachers requesting to visit should meet with you to discuss their purpose and report back with an evaluation of what they have observed and learned.

Parent Workshops. As mentioned earlier, many benefits can result from school-sponsored parent workshops. These workshops can be scheduled during the school day or during the evening hours. During the past school year one of the authors, in consultation with his parent advisory committee, wrote a grant for such a program, with funding provided through the Florida State Department of Education.

We first surveyed parents to determine which workshop topics would be of greatest interest and benefit to them. After compiling a list of topics, the next task was to find consultants to conduct the training sessions. Whenever possible, we used our own teachers as workshop leaders and presenters. For example, five kindergarten teachers jointly conducted a workshop titled, "How to Prepare Your Child for Kindergarten," which was attended by 75 parents in the evening. The teachers were paid from grant funds.

We also have hired some outside consultants for parent workshops with our grant funds. For instance, a nutritionist presented a workshop on the effects of nutrition on learning, and a psychologist from the county mental health department conducted a six-session workshop on "Parent Survival Skills." Both workshops were well received by the parents, and attendance was good. In all, 21 workshops were offered during the school year.

To generate parent participation, we used some of our grant money to advertise upcoming workshops in local newspapers. Parents who pre-registered were called the day before the workshop to remind them of the time and place. As a convenience to parents, free child care was provided by non-instructional staff, who were paid by grant funds.

Undertaking parent education programs as extensive as those described above may not be feasible without outside funding, but even a modest program using local resources will yield many benefits in the form of improved communication with parents, better-informed parents, and positive public relations.

Selecting a Facility

Several factors must be considered in selecting a facility for staff inservice sessions. If the inservice program is a series of short sessions either before or after school, then the obvious site is your own school building. On the other hand, if you are planning an inservice day when the students are not in attendance, you have some flexibility as to where to house it.

Using your own school building has some obvious advantages. You are in familiar surroundings and have access to all the materials and audiovisual equipment you might need. Also, no extra travel time needs to be built into the schedule. Another advantage is that social activities planned in conjunction with the inservice activity can be arranged with less strain on financial resources. For example, the authors planned a potluck lunch during inservice day at their schools. This provided a relaxing time for a meal and socializing between the morning and afternoon sessions. The same considerations apply when planning an inservice project with another school, with sessions alternated between the two schools.

The best argument for moving the inservice activity out of a school facility to a hotel/motel meeting room is that it gives teachers a chance to get away from their work site. When the authors first did this, the comments of several teachers on the evaluation rang loud and clear: "We appreciate being treated like professionals." The fact that we had gone to the extra expense on their behalf resulted in positive dividends in their self-esteem and was well worth the costs.

Of course, costs for an outside meeting facility do have to be taken into consideration. But there is usually room for negotiation. When the authors investigated the cost of a hotel meeting room for an inservice program, we found that it was going to take a substantial portion of our budget. After explaining our problem to the manager, we were able to negotiate to get the room free if we would pay for a lunch for the participants. The lunch was $10 per person, which

is a hefty amount for a teacher's pocketbook; and it would have depleted our budget if the school paid for it. Again with a little negotiation, the teachers agreed to pay $5 for lunch and we picked up the balance. In our case, everyone came out winners: we had a nice facility, enjoyed an excellent lunch, and stayed within our allotted budget.

Other possibilities for an inservice facility are at the district office or, for smaller groups, at the home of one of the participants or the principal. Again, they offer the chance for teachers to work together at a site away from their own school.

Finding Resources

We have already mentioned the potential of your building staff to serve as inservice facilitators, including your own expertise. But there are several other sources of expertise available to you. One possibility is personnel in your district office. During our joint inservice venture, the authors asked the district elementary curriculum coordinator to give a presentation on the current curriculum trends and how they applied to the classrooms in our schools. Other principals, teachers, and non-instructional staff in the district may have special expertise that would be appropriate for inservice sessions. All that is needed, in most cases, is an invitation from you and your school inservice committee.

Private consultants are available for almost any type of inservice need, but they do not come cheap. An alternative is to check with the school service unit of the local university. These units, usually associated with the department or school of education, can provide consultants in many specialties for both short- and long-term inservice programs at reasonable costs.

Still another untapped resource is the expertise existing in your community. We have found that many community members are willing to contribute their time and expertise to help the schools do a better job. One of the best resources is personnel from your local hospital or mental health agency. They have specialists who conduct education programs in almost every area related to health and emotional well-being. Perhaps you can strike a deal to allow your staff to be included in their inservice programs and vice versa. The local law enforcement agency is another source of expertise in such areas as drugs, child abuse, and traffic safety, to name a few. Attorneys might be invited to lead a discussion on legal issues relevant to teachers and other staff, such as negligence, confidentiality of student records, student due-process rights, and special education law. There are many resources available outside the school community to be tapped.

Financing

Financing your school-based staff development program is likely to be a test of your creativity and inventiveness. Ideally a school-based inservice program would be funded from a direct allocation from the district budget. Yet, even those schools fortunate enough to receive some district funding never seem to have enough. You and other principals in your district will have to build your case for the efficacy of school-based inservice programs. When budget time rolls around, take your case to the superintendent and the board of education. Enlist the support of your parents and teachers. If your parent organization is willing to raise funds for inservice activity, you are in a strong position to ask the board for at least matching funds.

Another possible source of funding is a grant from the community and state agencies or from foundations. There are several out there, some quite large. Grant writing requires a lot of time and effort and must have staff involvement in defining the need and justifying the resources you are requesting. Be alert for announcements from local, state, and national agencies about available grants and how to apply for them.

Again, there is the possibility of locating support in the community. We have discussed in-kind contributions like free space and using community members with special expertise. Other businesses that do not have such physical or human resources might be willing to contribute supplies and equipment or food for a luncheon. Some businesses even provide cash donations to help defray the expenses of inservice sessions. Asking is the only way you will find who are the friends and supporters of schools in your community.

Another possibility for gaining community support is joint training activities. Some inservice topics lend themselves to employees of non-school organizations. If these organizations' employees are invited to participate, they might be able to reciprocate by providing meeting space and other resources. An example of such reciprocation involved one of the authors. He was trained by a consultant company in the techniques of a self-enhancement program for employees. The program teaches employees how to use reflective thinking, planning, and imagery to improve their work performance. As a certified trainer, the author wanted to present the program to his own school staff. The only cost was for the materials, which were quite expensive. In order to afford the materials, the author agreed to present the program to selected employees of a local franchise of a national

hotel chain in exchange for the meeting room and picking up the tab for the purchase of the materials. All parties involved thought they got a good deal.

Pulling It Off

Planning a school-based inservice program can take so many twists and turns that you have to be prepared for the unexpected. Problems can be as simple as the bulb in the overhead blowing out or as horrendous as the consultant failing to show because his mother-in-law died. Every detail should be laid out and monitored throughout the planning and implementation stages. The adage, "Expect the unexpected," applies. Following are some tips for avoiding the unexpected:

1. Figure out all of the materials you will need and then pack a second set in case they get lost or misplaced. Store the spare set separately from the first set.
2. If you are using audiovisual equipment, make sure it is in working order, determine whether an extension cord is needed, and have extra projection bulbs available.
3. Check out the room or space you will be using well ahead of time. Do not leave the physical arrangement to the morning of the presentation.
4. Go over the details of the planning with members of the committee assigned to help with the event at least twice before the final day. This is especially important if you are renting space or depending on community help.
5. Keep everyone in the organization informed of your plans from the superintendent on down. (It never hurts to invite him or her to make some welcoming remarks at an all-day inservice event.)
6. Outside program presenters should be contacted a month ahead and then a week ahead of the event to remind them of the arrangements for the program.
7. If you are working with a strong committee, spread out the responsibilities. It keeps you from trying to do everything and trying to remember everything.
8. Keep notes on everything you do and file for future reference; especially note the mistakes so you will not repeat them.

Setting a Schedule

Several factors need to be considered when setting the schedule for an inservice activity. When selecting a date and time, you should first check the school calendar to see if there are any conflicts. One of the authors was invited to speak on the topic of teacher burn-out and stress at an after-school faculty inservice program at a school in another district. He was told by the host school's principal that he should conclude his presentation by 4:00 p.m. Midway through the presentation, he noticed the audience looking at their watches and the clock on the wall. What the principal had forgotten was that, by union contract, the teachers could leave school at 3:30 p.m. They were courteous and stayed, but clearly little was learned about stress that day other than everyone feeling some of it.

If you are working with a community agency, you will have to coordinate with its schedule as well. If you intend to rent a meeting room, plan well enough ahead to reserve it and get on the calendar. If it is an all-day inservice program, allow time for breaks and meal functions. Give speakers a specific time limit. Get it all down on paper, inform all concerned, and enlist their support in sticking to the schedule.

Finally, build in flexibility and contingency plans. Speakers do miss planes or get sick; equipment you were promised may be double-booked or out of order, and so on.

Evaluation

The success of a school-based staff development activity will not be judged on the planning but on the results. Participants will have opinions about the relevance of the topics to their work, the effectiveness of the presentation, the conditions of the physical setting, and so on. It is imperative that you conclude every inservice activity with some form of evaluation. A simple questionnaire can be used for feedback. The Appendix contains two sample questionnaires for evaluating inservice activities.

Some Final Thoughts

As principal, you have many responsibilities requiring daily attention. The temptation is to deal with the immediate, to keep the lid on and not rock the boat. But your role is more than one of managing and maintaining the status quo. As instructional leader of your school, you first need to have a vision of where you want your school to go and then how it will get there. We can think of no better way of creating a professional climate for school improvement than by establishing an ongoing, school-based staff development program. This publication will help you get started. If you are hesitant, consider teaming up with a more experienced principal and begin by planning some joint activities.

Finally, remember that as principal you can play a significant role in establishing a successful inservice program at your school if you:

1. set a positive tone for inservice in your school by being enthusiastic;
2. create an atmosphere of trust and collegiality within the school;
3. lead staff members to work collaboratively toward establishing schoolwide inservice goals;
4. identify, along with staff, the most effective inservice delivery methods for meeting the school goals;
5. keep abreast of developments and innovations in education through active membership in professional organizations and through reading current professional literature;
6. encourage staff members to join and become active members in their professional organizations;
7. continually assess the individual professional strengths and needs of your staff, the needs of the students, the desires of the parents, and the educational goals of the district;
8. establish avenues for staff to broaden and expand their roles in the inservice process; and

9. evaluate, along with your staff, the effectiveness of the inservice program in meeting schoolwide professional development needs and goals.

Appendix

Feedback Form*

Your feedback on today's program can provide valuable information that will help us improve the quality of programs we offer. Please give careful consideration to the following questions before you respond.

For items 1-5, circle the number which best expresses your feelings about the program on a scale of 1 to 7:

	Poor						Outstanding
1. Speaker's knowledge of the subject	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Speaker's presentation skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Speaker's interaction with participants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Handouts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Visual aids	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. What would you have liked more of?

7. What would you have liked less of?

8. What was the high point of the program for you?

9. What was the low point of the program for you?

10. Was the day worth the time, effort, and money you invested?
_____ Yes _____ No

11. Will you recommend this program to others?
_____ Yes _____ No _____ Definitely Not

12. If someone were to ask you about your overall impression of today's program, what would you say?

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Evaluation of Inservice Activities*

Consultant Evaluation:

	Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Below Expectation
Workshop was conducted with enthusiasm.			
Presentation was clear and organized.			
Open to questions, discussions, flexible.			
Methods and/or media used were effective.			

General Comments:

Component Evaluation:

	Exceeded Expectation	Met Expectation	Below Expectation
Objectives of this inservice were clarified and discussed.			
There was a direct correlation between announced objectives and activities.			
The specific objectives were adequately met.			
The inservice met my immediate needs.			
The inservice met my long-range needs.			

General Comments:

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